Hertel votes against NASA hike

Here's how Observer & Eccentric-area House of Representatives members were recorded on major roll call votes in the week ending May 4. There were no Senate votes.

HOUSE

FLOOD INSURANCE — By a vote of 388 for and 18 against, the House passed a bill (HR 1236) expanding the 13-year-old National Flood Insurance Program, a combined government-private sector insurer for flood-prone residential properties that cannot get affordable private coverage.

Sponsors said only 15 percent of the 11 million households in flood areas have property insurance. The bill would broaden coverage by requiring all mortgage lenders to require borrowers in high-risk areas to obtain the taxpayer-backed insurance. Presently only federally regulated or insured lenders must require the insurance.

The bill begins a $5-a-policy surcharge to finance a new program of grants for communities and individual property owners undertaking flood-protection projects. It creates an agency within the Federal Insurance Administration to administer the grants program.

A yes vote was to expand the National Flood Insurance Program.

Voting yes were Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, Dennis Hertel-D-Harper Woods, William Ford, D-Taylor, Sander Levin, D-Southfield and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

Budget Issue — The House rejected a Republican amendment affirming that the Office of Management and Budget in the executive branch should estimate the cost of programs under last year's five-year budget deal.

The vote was 160 for and 248 against. It occurred during debate on HR 1236 (above), which as written by Democrats empowers the Congressional Budget Office to "score" the cost of the National Flood Insurance Program.

The 1990 budget pact gave the OMB scorekeeping power. But House rules adopted early in 1991 put the CBO in charge.

Though non-partisan, the CBO is seen by Republicans as less supportive of their aims than the White House-linked OMB. Democrats, who control Congress, are leery of OBM Director Richard Darman and pro-for the CBO.

The estimating power is important because projected spending hikes or revenue losses must be offset by savings in other federal.

A yes vote was to have the White House's OMB estimate the cost of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Voting yes were Pursell and Broomfield. Voting no were Hertel, William Ford and Levin.

To Fund NASA — By a vote of 361 for and 36 against, the House passed a bill (HR 1089) authorizing $14.9 billion for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in fiscal 1992, up one billion or 7 percent over 1991 spending.

The bill provides the full two billion sought by NASA to further develop the space station Freedom, but orders a National Academy of Sciences review of the disputed project.

NASA has spent about five and a half billion toward a projected $30 billion ultimate cost that would be three times its original estimate. The station is scheduled to be manned for scientific experiments by 2000.

Supporter Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., said "this bill is fiscally responsible" and keeps America ahead in space exploration.

Opponent Tim Roemer, D-Ind., said the bill "rapidly increases spending . . . on our space program while the programs for our children such as Head Start are going begging."

A yes vote supported the space agency funding bill.

Voting yes were Pursell, William Ford, Levin and Broomfield. Hertel voted no.

Roll Call Report

State environmental policies featured at EMEAC meeting

An overview of Gov. John Engler's environmental policies will highlight the 21st annual meeting of the East Michigan Environmental Action Council at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Birmingham Unitarian Church.

Charles McIntosh, Michigan's environmental adviser, will be guest speaker. After a presentation, he will take questions from the audience.

Comments of members made at the meeting or submitted in writing will be reviewed by the EMEAC board and incorporated into a statement of the general membership's concerns that will be sent to the governor's office.

Edward Hutsoles, chief planner for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, also will be on the evening's program. He will speak on future trends for southeast Michigan and address concerns on urban sprawl.

The program will be preceded by a cheese-and-cracker reception followed by a dessert buffet.

Admission is $10 per person and available to anyone. For more information, call 258-5188.

Birmingham Unitarian Church is at 651 N. Woodward in Bloomfield Hills.

Quayle nest

County Republicans recall veep's positive visit

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

During his visits to Oakland County, Dan Quayle was anything but a bungling, immature nincompoop, according to area Republicans who insist he's getting a bum — and partisan — rap.

Last June, for example, Vice President Quayle raised almost $40,000 for Oakland County Republicans, noted GOP county chairman James M. Alexander. "That was the biggest fund-raiser we've ever had."

Alexander and others talked about the vice president earlier this week in light of the heart problems that hospitalized President George Bush shortly after he gave the graduation address to an audience of 70,000 at the University of Michigan Saturday.

Although Bush's problem was not serious, it raised the possibility — some would say specter — of Quayle becoming president. It also triggered renewed debate — and jokes — about Quayle's qualifications and maturity.

EVEN IN GOP circles, reported one Republican who asked not to be identified, Quayle was the butt of jokes. Most were good-natured, but they were jokes nonetheless.

Example: What was Quayle's reaction upon hearing Bush would not be required to turn the presidency over to him? The response was, "He slammed his door and held his breath until turning blue."

Example: What are the two most fearful words in the English language? Answer: "President Quayle."

The Guardian, a respected British newspaper, had this in an editorial on Quayle succeeding Bush: "When George Bush clutches his chest and fights for breath, so too . . . do millions around the world . . . It is not George they particularly love; it is Dan Quayle they particularly fear."

Such comments — good-natured or otherwise — are misdirected when aimed at Quayle, said Alexander.

President Bush has given him some important assignments and he's handled them exceptionally well, Alexander said. "He's been an asset, and I'll bet Bush keeps him on the ticket (in 1992)."

For one thing, he continued, Quayle has been loyal to the President and the GOP. On the political fund-raising circuit — like his June appearance in Oakland County — Quayle has helped raised more than $18 million.

"I was slightly in awe of the vice president when he came here," Alexander recalled, referring to Quayle's appearance at Roma Hall in Bloomfield Township last June.

"BUT WITHIN MINUTES he put me and everybody else at ease," Alexander said. "He's a cooperative guy and a very knowledgeable speaker."

County commissioner Nancy McConnell remembers thinking of Quayle as a "giant killer" when he came to Oakland County in 1981. "And he was so good looking . . . good enough to be a Democrat."

That was shortly after Quayle, then a 33-year-old U.S. Representative from Fort Wayne, upset incumbent U.S. Sen. Birch Bayh of Indiana.

That was in the first Ronald Reagan landslide, admits McConnell. But at that time Bayh was frequently mentioned as a possible presidential contender and his was a powerful name — particularly Indiana.

Bayh's favorable name identification is believed to be at least part of the reason his son, Evan Bayh, was elected governor of Indiana in 1988 — the year of the Bush landslide.

Democrats, on the other hand, say Bush's problems rightly focus debate on the qualifications of the person who is a heartbeat away from the presidency.

"I think Quayle is a featherweight," said county commissioner Dennis M. Aaron of Oak Park. "Nothing he does inspires confidence. He's always off playing golf or something like that."

Aaron acknowledges that vice presidents are normally low-profile adjuncts to the President. Even so, he'd prefer somebody with stature or demonstrated ability.

He said he understands how some enmities — only half jokingly — suggest Bush strengthen the GOP ticket by replacing Dan Quayle with his wife, Marilyn, who is also a lawyer.

Another Oakland Democrat, commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick of Southfield, said it's unseemly to make jokes about the vice president.

"He's no longer a joke," Pernick quipped.

"Seriously, though, once somebody is elected, I want him or her to do well, to meet the responsibilities of the office," Pernick said. "At the next election it might be another story. But I think everybody ought to wish Quayle well."

ONE DEMOCRAT who didn't take that approach may pay a penalty in the long run, according to Alexander. That's Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas and chairman of the Democratic Leadership Conference that met earlier this week in Cleveland.

"He (Clinton) was on one of the talk shows Sunday saying derogatory things about Quayle," said Alexander. "It was very unseemly. I believe people will remember that."

Alexander insists that part of any Quayle problem is his age, 44, and youthful appearance. "People think that because he's young he hasn't accomplished much. They're wrong."

Alexander said he's particularly sensitive to cracks about Quayle's age. "I'm 43."

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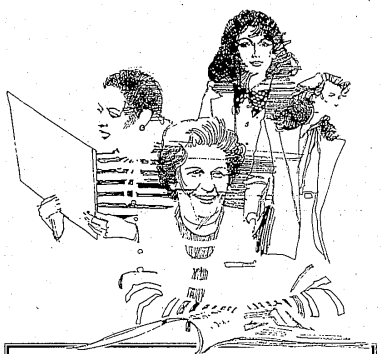

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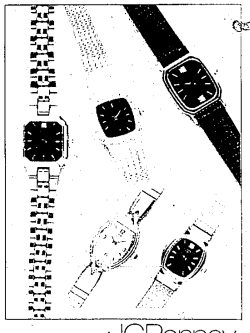

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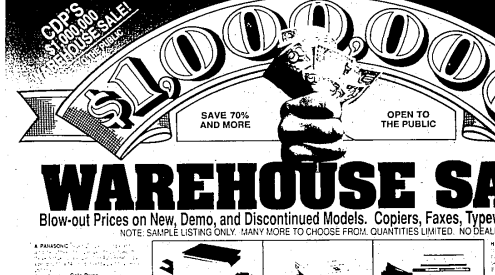

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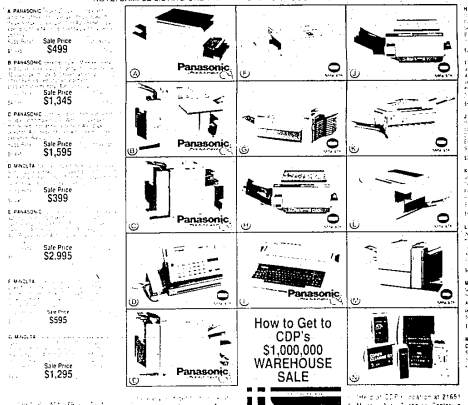

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